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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LAGOS 000201

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STATE PASS NSC FOR MICHELE GAVIN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PM](#) [EPET](#) [ECON](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: IJAW YOUTH COUNCIL TELLS CONSUL GENERAL
OF CAMPAIGN FOR AMNESTY, DDR

REF: A. ABUJA 601
[1](#)B. LAGOS 04
[1](#)C. 08 LAGOS 069

Classified By: Consul General Donna M. Blair for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Consul General met March 23 with Ijaw Youth Council spokespersons Dr. Felix Tuodolo, Chairman of the IYC Committee on Security and Economic Development (CSED), currently a lecturer in Corporate Social Responsibility at Liverpool University, and first President of the IYC; Engineer Udengs Eradiri, Secretary, CSED; Chief Dan Ekpiele, a high chief of the Gbaramatu Kingdom of Delta State, and Dr. Chris Ekiyor, current President of the IYC. To carry out the consensus achieved at the IYC-organized summit of Ijaw Youths held February 6 in Yenagoa to close the militant camps within 90 days, the IYC has advocated amnesty for militants as a necessary prerequisite for its plan of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), and has lobbied the Inspector General of Police, the head of the State Security Service (SSS), and the Minister and Minister of State for the Niger Delta Ministry. Bayelsa State supports all aspects of the IYC's DDR plan but cannot grant amnesty, a federal prerogative; the State will run a pilot of the IYC plan on the camp of Joshua MacGyver, whose decision to abandon militancy marks a "major turning point", the IYC spokesmen said. The IYC asked that the Mission advocate with the Government of Nigeria for amnesty. Consul General cautioned that until there is a comprehensive settlement, the United States will not get out in front on the amnesty issue. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Consul General met March 23 with member of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), including Dr. Felix Tuodolo, Chairman of the IYC Committee on Security and Economic Development (CSED), currently a lecturer in Corporate Social Responsibility at Liverpool University, and first President of the IYC; Engineer Udengs Eradiri, Secretary, CSED; Chief Dan Ekpiele, a high chief of the Gbaramatu Kingdom of Delta State, and Dr. Chris Ekiyor, current President of the IYC. Also present were Pol-Econ Chief and Officer, and Regional Affairs Office Chief.

MacGyver Camp Will Be Pilot for IYC's DDR Program

[1](#)3. (C) Dr. Tuodolo said that the IYC-sponsored Ijaw Youth Summit (Ref) on February 6 reached a consensus that militant camps should be demobilized and a program of disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration (DDR) entered into. Summit participants called for the camps to be dismantled within 90 days. Bayelsa State Governor Timipre Silva fully supports the proposed program, and following the Summit set up a team to work with the IYC to implement key parts of the program. One camp located in Bayelsa State, headed by Joshua MacGyver with a population of 524 militants, has come forward to be the program's pilot group.

14. (C) However, Dr. Tuodolo explained, Bayelsa State, which is the location of 13 major camps, cannot move forward because it is clear that whoever leaves the camps will face problems with the security services; the militants in the camps may have been involved in crimes against individuals, the community or the government and are subject to arrest. The State Government does not have the power to grant amnesty, but Governor Silva has promised to advocate for amnesty with the President. (Note: On April 6, the President told PDP Chieftains that he had agreed to grant amnesty. Ref 1B. End Note)

IYC Lobbies for Amnesty, DDR

15. (C) The IYC has met with the Inspector General of Police, the Director General of the State Security Service (SSS), the Minister for the Niger Delta, and the head of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), and all have reacted positively to the IYC's plan. They are now preparing to take their case for amnesty to the National Assembly; the Speaker has asked to meet with them. The IYC also has discussed DDR

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with the President's National Commission on Small Arms and are approaching traditional rulers from areas outside the Niger Delta, such as the Sultan of Sokoto, the Ooni of Ife and the Oba of Benin, for their support

16. (C) In response to questions by RAO, the IYC spokesmen said the leaders of the militant camps have said they are willing to give up their arms; despite the loss of power and money, they are willing to do so because their motive is justice, and the freedom to come back into society. When former President Obasanjo gave Asari-Dokubo amnesty, he was able to re-enter normal society, they said. However, a leader like Boyloaf (Victor Ebikobowei) cannot just turn to non-violence; he will be picked up by the security forces and never allowed to see a lawyer, the IYC spokesmen alleged. Asked if combatant leaders will publicly support the plan, IYC spokespersons pointed to Joshua MacGyver, whose decision to come in the IYC spokespersons called a "major turning point." Tom Polo (Government Ekpompolo) also stands behind the plan, and has received the Vice President, Chief of Defense Staff, Minister of the Interior and the Niger Delta Technical Committee members at Camp Five as proof of his commitment to peace.

Security Funds Obstacle to Amnesty, Peace

17. (C) The IYC spokesmen criticized the security allocation received by the states, which militates not only against amnesty but also against peace. This year, the group alleged, the total amount allocated to the states is 800 billion naira (approximately USD 5 billion), up from 400 billion (approximately USD 2.9 billion) in 2008, the IYC spokesmen alleged. (Note: Post doubts this enormous figure can be correct. In contrast, the 2009 defense budget provides for naira 1.5 billion (approximately USD 10 million) for military arms, while the Niger Delta Ministry's 2009 budget provides for naira 710 million (approximately USD 47 million) for security. End Note) This money does not have to be accounted for, and is embezzled and used for corruption; those that benefit from the funds and from insecurity in the Niger Delta will thwart every move toward amnesty and peace, the IYC spokesmen said. If militants were

granted amnesty, there would be no excuse for the allocation of large sums to security, and other lucrative sources of income would also disappear. The IYC has called for an accounting of how the security funds are being spent, but the Government of Nigeria has routinely ignored these calls for information. The IYC needs the voices of international stakeholders, such as the United States, to bolster the request, and to examine the response.

IYC Presents Program, Asks Support on Amnesty

18. (C) The IYC decided to present its program formally to the U.S. Mission so that the Mission can look it over, and advise "where it can." The IYC is also asking the U.S. Government to plead with the Government of Nigeria to establish an environment conducive to peace, that is to grant a general amnesty. In addition, if the Government of Nigeria accepts the IYC plan, then the IYC will in the future also ask the U.S. Government for assistance in training and reintegrating militant youths into society. The IYC believes South Africa presents a model on which to base such training, including training in non-violent principles, social skills necessary for reintegration into society, and job-related skills in the oil and gas and maritime sectors, needed if the youths are going to be employable. The IYC has reached out to the British High Commission, which held out the prospect of soft training to be conducted through DfID, and said it would add its voice to the call for amnesty. The IYC spokesperson have also met with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) at the Kofi Annan Center in Ghana; the Center has agreed to accept Niger Delta militants for non-violence and job skills training. (Note: The British Deputy High Commissioner told us that he had been in a listening mode and had made no commitments; we have not confirmed the other offers of assistance. End Note). The IYC has also approached the Embassy of South Africa, and the

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Mayor of Durban about disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs.

19. (C) Consul General cautioned that until there is a comprehensive settlement Framework, the United States will not get out in front on the amnesty issue. She also noted that the Nigerian people will have to support any grant of amnesty. In response, the IYC spokesmen emphasized the important role of the international community in resolving the apartheid problem in South Africa. They noted that Nigeria lacks the political will to solve the problems of the Niger Delta, and will need international encouragement to muster the needed resolve. Inquiries and shows of interest from third countries will always be helpful in a place like Nigeria, where big men and mafias have the ear of the politicians, the spokesmen stated.

BLAIR